

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

May 4, 1999

LB 321, 880

allocated to Program Classification No. 367, Community-Based Services, may be budgeted and expended as grant funds. That was authority to expend \$500,000 in grant funds that was taken out of the budget. I am proposing to restore those words back. I will tell you that the committee agreed, excuse me, yeah, the committee agreed yesterday on that. It's also on the behalf of the administration. I want to give a little history on that. This is in the Office of Community Justice. This was created by the Community Correctional Facilities and Programs Act passed in 1993 under LB 627. The purpose of the act was to encourage implementation of statewide community-based alternatives to corrections and incarcerations by units of local government, Department of Correctional Services, and nongovernmental agencies. Funding was not appropriated for this program in 1993. In 1997-98, \$1 million was appropriated over two years to develop community corrections programs. The current budget for '99-2000 appropriates \$500,000 for operations and grants for programs and this amendment then, passed by Senator Pedersen the other day, does strike the ability to spend those \$500,000. In 1998, there were initiatives to provide structure of the act, but it failed to pass. And in 1999, LB 321, sponsored by Senator Brashear, which we have not seen yet, was introduced to provide structure and clarify operations for implementation of community-based alternative to incarceration. LB 321 is still in Judiciary Committee. My proposal here is to restore the funding because I think, and the committee agrees, that we need to proceed along the lines of these community grants. These are much more flexible and diversified than the Probation grant system alone. There are many...this is a way for communities to tailor programs for the needs that they have and they...it's taken awhile to get started up because each community is different across the state. In other words, we felt that the programs needed in Omaha are different than those needed in Benkelman or Trenton or Gordon. And so we've had those...money put out there and now, I mean the infrastructure has been put out there. These grants are ready to be used, and taking away this appropriation authority destroys that ability for those counties to react. And so we have felt, the Appropriations Committee, which was part of our original budget, by the way, and after conversation with the administration, we have felt that these...this appropriation authority probably ought to be restored. If you recall the other day, the body had the debate